



Mark Anderson

An IT & web development manager, a photographer, a husband and a father of a teenager.

[Home](#)[Gallery](#)[My Drive](#)[About](#)[Contact](#)

CivilWar.org Photo Contest

By **Mark** on October 2, 2010 4:42 PM

Back in July of this year I took a trip out to Manassas Battlefield to photograph for my Civil War in Infrared project. I blogged about some of the photos from that [trip previously](#). I entered several photos from that trip into the annual Civil War Preservation Trust photo contest. This is the second time I have entered.

About a month ago I was notified that I was a finalist in the Battlefield group and my photo of Henry House Hill was the background image on the home page.



I ended up coming in second in the Battlefield category and I'm very pleased. The infrared photo technique may not be as accessible to most viewers and I'm happy that the judges liked my photo.

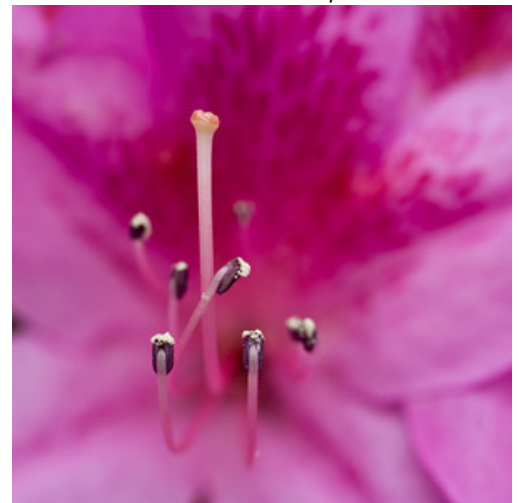
Here is snippet of what they had to say about my photo on the website.

"This remarkable landscape photo of the Henry House at the Bull Run battlefield caught all of our judges attention."



FEATURED PHOTOGRAPH

Azaela Closeup



Buy a Print

[Digital Photo Workshops](#)

Classes with digital landscape photo pioneer Stephen Johnson
www.sjphoto.com

[Share Favorite Photos](#)

Join Today & Get 50 Free Prints. Free Photo Storage & Photo Sharing
www.snapfish.com

[Rose Restorations](#)

Photo Restoration Studio - East Bay Call Rose Restorations
415 265 0877
www.roserestorations.com

[Photos on Canvas](#)

Canvas Prints from any photo Gallery wraps of all sizes
www.photoworksff.com



RECENT ENTRIES

Is this thing on?

Last night after my monthly photoclub meeting I was driving home listening to a recent episode of This Week in...

By Mark

LensWork Podcast

I'm starting off my podcast reviews with one of my favorite podcasts on photography. The

MARK ANDERSON
(Flickr Name: *macmoov*)
Laytonsville, MD

"Henry Hill House"

This remarkable landscape photo of the Henry House at the Bull Run battlefield caught all of our judges' attention. Mark Anderson's use of an infrared camera and the dramatic construct of the image all combine to create a truly memorable photograph of this important 1861 battlefield.

It was here, in July 1861 that the real combat of the Civil War began. Next year we will commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Bull Run.



01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

I would like to congratulate all of the winners. You can view all of the [winning photos](#) at the [following link](#). I plan on entering again next year and I hope I can place as well again.

End of Summer

By [Mark](#) on August 30, 2010 4:01 PM

The month of August has just flown by and with it the end of Summer. Last night I took a look at what I did photographically for the month of August and the results were not very impressive. I only shot 86 photos during the month and the majority of them need to go to the trash.

As I look back at August my main priority was working my day job. The middle of August was the completion of a 8 month project to launch a new client using my companies software. With that my various photo projects have taken a back seat.

Now that the pressures of the day job have lessened I found the urge to get back out there to photograph. I have also started to walk on a regular basis and have been taking the opportunity to photograph on my various outings.

Shown above and below are a couple of images I took while walking a local trail called [Magruder Branch](#) trail.



LensWork podcast is produced by...

By Mark

My Computer Backup Solution

One of my hard drives died last week. However I was not that concerned about about loosing my data since...

By Mark

CATEGORIES

[Civil War](#) (9)

[History](#) (2)

[Photography](#) (418)

[Technology](#) (9)

[Travel](#) (3)

[Wallpaper](#) (9)

RECENT MY DRIVE PHOTOS

[The Man with the Plan](#)
[Something Interesting This Way Comes](#)
[Hipster](#)
[Blue Clouds](#)
[Local Produce](#)

TAG CLOUD

[Captive](#) [National Zoo](#)
[Triple D](#) [Macro](#) [Water](#)
[B&W](#) [Brookside Gardens](#)
[Civil War](#) [photowalking](#)
[Christmas](#) [photography](#)
[portrait](#) [Rachel Carson Trail](#)
[wallpaper](#) [Bald Eagle](#) [Abstract](#)
[Lights](#) [Bird](#) [New Hampshire](#) [700](#)



I'm also not very happy with the progress I have made on my Civil War Infrared project. I was only able to visit a couple of locations this year. This weekend we had some great blue skies and puffy clouds, so I decided to head over to Monocacy battlefield in Frederick Maryland. By the time I arrived at the battlefield the clouds had already moved off into the distance. I will just need to keep my eye on the skies and return again.

Here are a few a shots while visiting the Best Farm at Monocacy battlefield.



SHOW OFF!

twitter

Join the conversation

 NetworkedBlogs

Followers (1)

Follow this blog



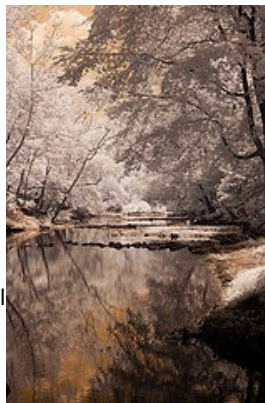
Looking ahead I have several events that I will be photographing over the next couple of months and I should return back to my normal shooting frequency.

Manassas Battlefield

By **Mark** on July 3, 2010 4:00 PM

Last weekend I made my first trip to Manassas Battlefield in Virginia. This is the site of the first major battle of the Civil War. The First Battle of Bull Run, also known as the First Battle of Manassas (the Confederate and Union forces had **different names for each battle**.) This first battle was fought on July 21, 1861. A second battle was also fought at this location a year later in August.

Just a few months after the start of the war at Fort Sumter the Union forces started their march toward the Confederate capital of Richmond Virginia. They believed that capturing the capital would put a quick end to the conflict. During the march to the capital the opposing sides had their first battle near a river called Bull Run (shown on right.)



During my planning for this trip I reviewed some of the photos taken by **Matthew Brady from the National Archives** on Flickr. I'm finding that viewing these photos gives me the opportunity to see what the battlefield looked like during this time period for scouting out important landmarks.

Shown below is a photo of Stone Bridge by Matthew Brady.



The Stone bridge was an important landmark in both of the battles that were fought at Bull Run. Stone Bridge crosses Bull Run to the North of the battlefield. After both battles the Union troops retreated across this bridge. It was destroyed during the Battle of First Manassas on July 21, 1861. A new bridge was built on the site of the old bridge in the same style as the first.

Here is a photo of the bridge from my recent visit.



The first battle of Bull Run started on Matthews Hill as 900 confederate troops attempted to delay over 10,000 Union troops. Shown below is a photo of Matthews Hill as seen from Henry House Hill. This delay gave the Confederates time to bring in support to block this advance.



At noon on the first day of fighting the Confederate troops were supported by Col. Thomas J. Jackson's Virginia brigade and his 13 cannons. During this battle Jackson earned his nickname Stonewall Jackson since he was able to stop the Union advance on the battlefield.



Overall I'm pleased with many of the images I was able to take at the battlefield and I'm looking forward to photograph some areas I was not able to visit on this trip, including many of the sites from the second battle of Bull Run. You can view additional photos from this quick day trip on my [Manassas Flickr set](#).



Bolsa Chica Wetlands

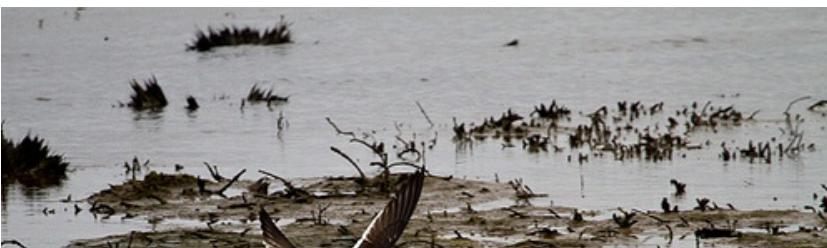
By **Mark** on June 29, 2010 5:05 PM

While I was in California visiting family I made a couple of trips out to the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve in Huntington Beach to photograph the birds and wetlands. I have visited the wetlands several times before when I lived in California. However, this was only my second time visiting with the intent of photographing the birds. The wetlands are very accessible and if you want to learn or practice your flight photography, this is an excellent location. You will also find that you have close access to many of the birds in the area. Here is a shot of a Snowy Egret that was perched on the railing about 10 feet from me.



On this trip I brought my 100-400mm lens on my Canon 7D and I used a monopod for stability. During the morning I was wishing I had my 300mm f2.8 due to the typical cloud cover that is known as June gloom in this area. In the afternoon there was plenty of light. The majority of my best shots were in the late afternoon after 5PM.

There is plenty of wildlife to shoot at the wetlands and I was able to spend some time photographing Black Skimmers. These birds are interesting since they will fly low to the the water skimming their beak on the surface searching for food.





I was also able to get a nice closeup flight shot as one of the Black Skimmers flew by me on the boardwalk. This is one my favorite shots from the day.



Shown below is a video of the Snowy Egret agitating the water to find food.

Here is a shot of a Great Egret waiting near the waters edge hunting for fish.



If you are visiting or live near the wetlands, I highly recommend this location. You can view more of my photos and videos on my [Bolsa Chica wetlands set on Flickr](#).



A Civil War Train Ride

By [Mark](#) on June 28, 2010 8:05 AM

Earlier this month I drove up to Wilmington Delaware to attend a photowalk and Civil War reenactment train ride. For this trip I brought my Infrared converted camera and my Canon 5D which shoots standard color images. The photowalk and train ride started at the [Wilmington & Western](#) train station. At this location they run several historic diesel and steam locomotives. On this day we rode #98 which is a 1909 American Standard steam locomotive.



One of the reasons why I drove over 2 hours to Delaware was to photograph Civil War reenactors that were going to be riding the train for a skirmish between the Union and Confederate troops. The train arrived at the station and the Union troops disembarked and served as guards for the train and the station.

The reenactors never broke character during the entire train ride and there were several civilian reenactors at the train



station as well.

Once everyone was boarded on the train it headed north up the Red Clay valley through some nice countryside and along the Red Clay Creek. The train ride was about 90 minutes and I recommend paying the extra dollar to sit in the open air car.



As we reached the end of the rail line the Confederate troops fired on the train from the cover of the trees and the Union troops left the train to engage in battle.



After the battle the Confederate troops were victorious and they boarded the train for the return trip back to the station.



It was an enjoyable day and I would like to visit the railroad again in the future. I have posted more photos from that day on Flickr in my [Wilmington & Western set](#).



Photowalk Season is Here

By **Mark** on June 1, 2010 9:39 AM

As we approach the Summer months it seems like the number of photowalks on the schedule increases dramatically. It has been over a year since I have attended my last photowalk and I'm looking forward to the following walks that are scheduled near my area.

The first one I'm excited about is the **Wilmington & Western Railroad** walk in Wilmington Delaware. This walk will be near an historic steam railroad station. There will be plenty of opportunities to photograph the historic rail line and trains. There is also the option to board the train with Civil War reenactors as they head off to a Civil War skirmish at the end of the rail line. I have already bought my ticket for the train ride and I'm planning on bringing my infrared camera for my Civil War IR project. This walk will be held on Saturday June 12th.

The next walk I have on my schedule is the 3rd annual World Wide Photowalk that was created by Scott Kelby. I have been to the first two and I just registered again to attend **Jeff Revell's walk in Georgetown** in Washington DC. This walk is scheduled for July 24th. There will be walks all over the world and if you have never been on a photowalk, this is a great chance to join one in your local area. Last year they had over 900 different locations hosting a photowalk.

One walk I was planning on going to but now can't is **Andy's New Oxford** walk next weekend on Saturday June 5th in Pennsylvania. I have been on several of Andy's walks in the past and he always has a great route planned.

It looks like we are off to a great start this year and it will be nice to meet up with many of my local photographer friends.

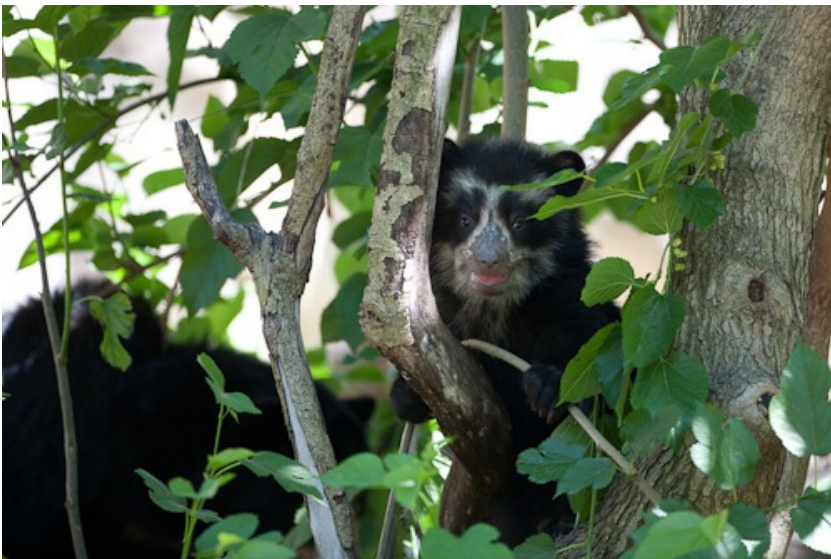
Andean Bear Cubs at the National Zoo

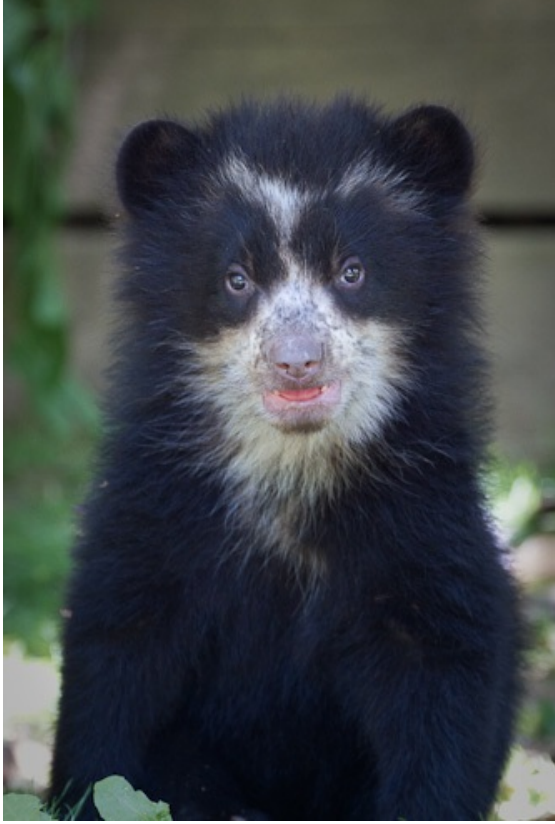
By **Mark** on May 20, 2010 7:33 AM

One of the perks of being part of the Friends of the National Zoo (FONZ) **photoclub** is that we are sometimes given special access to the animals. A couple of weekends ago we were able to photograph the new Andean bear cubs as they get their first chances to explore the outside yard. Yesterday the bear cubs were given names, Chaska, pronounced Chas'-kuh, for the female and Bernardo for the male cub.

Here is a selection of photos from that weekend.





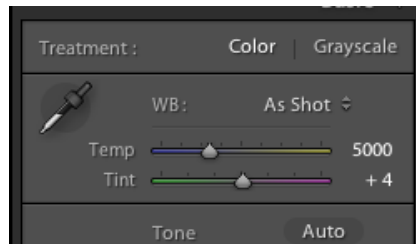


The lighting for that day was very bright and with dark bears, the contrast range was hard to photograph. I'm looking forward to my next trip to the zoo so I can get some photos in better lighting conditions. The bears will be viewable by the [general public on May 22nd](#).

Post Processing Experiments

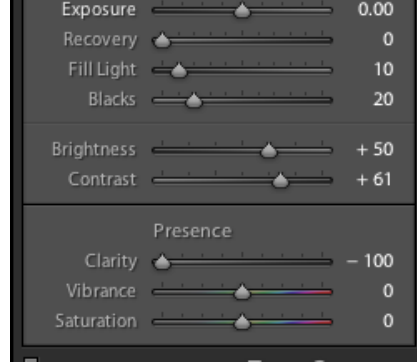
By [Mark](#) on May 18, 2010 11:25 AM

I recently started to shoot some subjects with the intent of experimenting with various post processing techniques for the final output. I do all of my image post processing in Adobe Photoshop Lightroom and have been experimenting with various saturation, contrast, and clarity settings.



When you are working in the develop module you are shown the following options for processing a photo (on right.)

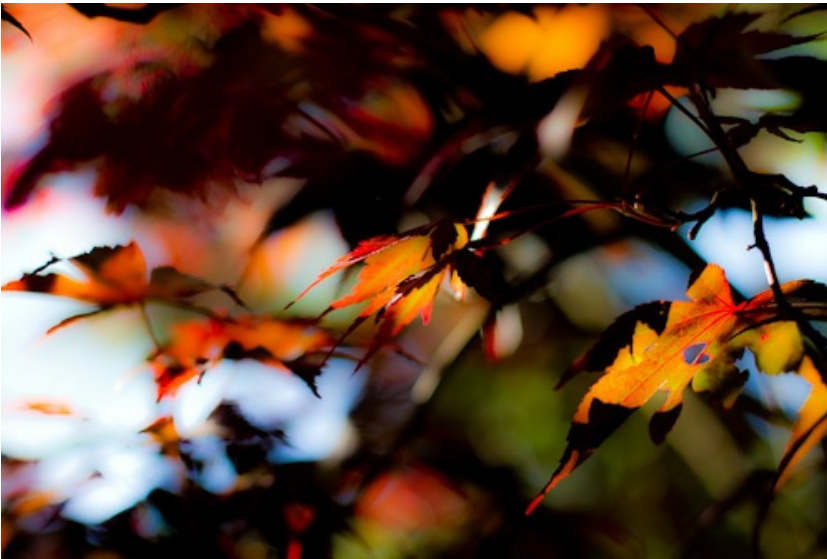
There are many sources on the net that go into great detail about how to use the develop module in Lightroom. Jon McCormak wrote a [good overview article](#) on the basic options each slider gives you in the develop module. I have listed additional resources at the bottom of this post.



My plan was to take various plant and foliage photos to experiment with different techniques on post processing.

In the following photos I didn't change the color saturation. I pumped up the blacks above normal and went with a negative 100 on the clarity slider. I also increased the overall contrast of the image.

One thing to keep in mind is that the clarity slider works on the contrast of the mid-tones of your image. The contrast slider works on the contrast range for the entire image. So with these settings I was effectively reducing the contrast of the image in the mid-tones via the clarity slider. I then increased the overall contrast with the contrast slider. This effect essentially increases the contrast in the shadows and highlights and leaves the mid-tones soft. When I pump up the saturation of the blacks I'm also increasing the contrast levels of the dark parts of the image. You can see this effect in the two images below.



For the next set of images I pumped up the blacks again to increase the shadow

contrast. I also increased the vibrance which adds more saturation to the non-predominant colors in the scene. Finally I went with a 100% positive on the clarity slider. This combined effect gives the images a look of punch and sharpness.



Here are the develop settings for the image of the green sedum plant above.



I'm a firm believer that there is no wrong way to process an image. If you like the effect or

the end result then you have a successful image. As an image maker you need to experiment with different effects to see which method works best for each subject and what appeals to you most. If you are not experimenting, then you are not growing.

Here are some additional Lightroom links that I follow on a regular basis and a link to a free Lynda.com training course on Lightroom:

[Lightroom Killer Tips](#)

[Lightroom Blog](#)

[Lightroom Journal](#)

[Lightroom Queen Blog](#)

[Lightroomers](#)

[Lightroom News](#)



Continue reading **Post Processing Experiments.**

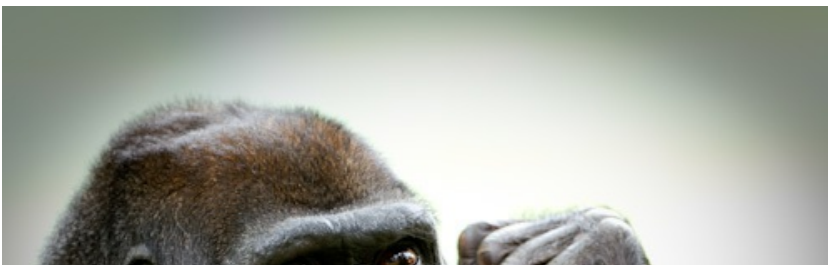
A Morning at the Zoo

By **Mark** on May 12, 2010 7:53 AM

This past weekend I made a trip out to the National Zoo to photograph some new baby animals. I can't post some of those photos until sometime next week. While I was there I photographed some of the other animals at the zoo. Here is a selection of some of my shots. These were all shot with my Canon 500mm f4 lens.

My first stop was to the outside yard of the Western Lowland Gorillas. This area has been under construction for the past couple of weeks and this was the first time they were back out in the yard.

Here is Kibibi riding on her mothers back. She is about 16 months old now.





After a visit to the gorillas I went over to Lion-Tiger hill to check out the big cats. Here is a shot of Luke who is expecting to be a father very soon. Nabba is currently off exhibit and lion cubs are expected sometime in the middle of this month.



Here is a photo of Shera, the other female lion, tearing into her enrichment bag.





Just over in the next yard is one of the Tigers.



The rest of the morning was spent with the new baby animals. I will post photos of them once I'm able to. If you are local to the DC area and want to learn more about the photoclub, just head on over to the [FONZ Photoclub website](#) to learn more.

Woopra Testing Results

By [Mark](#) on May 10, 2010 10:00 AM

Last week I ran a test to measure my sphere of influence with this website. I was also testing a new web analytics package called Woopra. A free trial can be found at [woopra.com](#). In my last post I went into a little bit of detail about Woopra and the benefits of using an application like this. Trey Ratcliff from StuckinCustoms.com [did a nice review of the Woopra service](#) and posted an example of how the service works for a site that actually gets some traffic.

When I started my test I was under the assumption that my sphere of influence was about 10 dedicated followers and a sphere of marginal interest up to 100.

I had four tasks setup for my test. One write an article, two measure the results for a day, three promote the post via twitter, and four report the over all results.

Well after writing the article I had one hit to the page for the first day (page number 4 listed below.)

Popular Pages		Landing Pages	Exit Pages	Outgoing Links	Downloads
		Visitors			
1	Milk Dud Estates - My Drive Project /mydrive/2010/05/milk-dud-estates.html	10	50%		▼
2	My Drive Project /mydrive/	1	5%		▼
3	Mist in the Trees - Mark Anderson /2009/02/mist-in-the-trees.html	2	10%		▼
4	Is this thing on? - Mark Anderson /2010/05/is-this-thing-on.html	1	5%		▼
5	Mark Anderson: Wallpaper Archives /wallpaper/	2	10%		▼
6	Mark Anderson: September 2005 ... /2005/09/	1	5%		▼
7	Mark Anderson /	1	5%		▼
8	Contact - Mark Anderson /contact/	1	5%		▼
9	Mark Anderson: June 2005 Archives /2005/06/	1	5%		▼

The next day I ran a small mention on Twitter (which is feed onto Facebook as well.) After that mention I gained 4 more hits to the page and all of them came from Facebook (NetworkedBlogs is a Facebook app.)

Pages		Referrers	Top Types	Top Hosts
Page	Views	Referrer	Visits	Pvs
Is this thing on? - Mark Anderson /2010/05/is-this-thing-on.html	4	facebook.com	1	2
Milk Dud Estates - My Drive Pro... /mydrive/2010/05/milk-dud-estates.html	2	networkedblogs...	1	2
Mark Anderson: Wallpaper Arch... /wallpaper/	1	google.com	1	1
Mark Anderson /	1			
Contact - Mark Anderson /contact/	1			
Keywords		Geography		
		Country	Visitors	Pvs
		United States	3	7
		Australia	1	1
		Netherlands	1	1

All total I received 6 hits to the page in the days since I published the article. I didn't reach my core of 10 people I estimated, but with numbers this small a margin of error can be huge. It also probably didn't help that the article was not that interesting to begin with unless you are a web analytics person.

After running this test I was able to determine that essentially my estimates for dedicated followers was somewhat accurate. However, I'm now thinking my sphere of marginal interest is much lower. In a nutshell I have very little traffic to this website. I knew that already since I never promote this website. One interesting item I found is that when I take into account all of my traffic for the various images I post in the [MyDrive](#) project. I'm able to reach more people. When it comes to images I consistently get about 20-30 page views for new images within the first couple of days of posting. When I post articles it is much lower. This test has confirmed a couple of key facts. I have a follower base as close to zero as you can be. I can either keep things the same and talk to my very small circle of friends, or can I increase this base to a list of 100 dedicated fans?

At work and with my various clients I tell them how to increase their traffic using all the standard techniques of engagement and promotion. I have also done this in the past with other website I have started or managed. Here is one example, I started www.altenergystocks.com and took the traffic from 0 to 10,000 page views a month in about about a year. I ended up selling that site to the current owners. Can I do the same with this website? Since I know I'm currently talking to myself here, I guess it is more of a question to myself. It would be an excellent case study that I can use and point to for the future. So here begins my journey to gain my 100 dedicated true fans.

[Archives](#)

[Home](#) | [Gallery](#) | [My Drive](#) | [About](#) | [Contact](#) | [Blog RSS](#) | [MyDrive RSS](#)

Copyright © 2010 Mark Anderson. All rights reserved.